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This paper is an analysis of Native American student alienation on a predominantly White university campus viewed through the lens of Critical Race Theory. It uses the narratives of 16 students in a qualitative study to question the assumption that minority student alienation is the result of a failure to adjust, adapt, integrate, and become involved with the traditional college setting. It suggests, in contrast, that certain aspects of university environments create and support forces that alienate. It recommends a broader, more inclusive curriculum and pedagogy, and urges higher education to listen to the voices of these students and to envision and create a new higher education culture that will provide support and services and an education relevant to their needs. (Contains 48 references.) (Author/SLD)

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Through a Critical Lens: Native American Alienation from Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an analysis of Native American student alienation on a predominantly White university campus as viewed through the lens of Critical Race Theory. It uses the narratives of sixteen students in a qualitative study to question the assumption that minority student alienation is the result of a failure to adjust, adapt, integrate and become involved with the traditional collegiate setting. It argues, in contrast, that certain aspects of university environments create and support forces that alienate. It recommends a broader, more inclusive curriculum and pedagogy, and urges higher education to listen to the voices of these students and to envision and create a new higher education culture that will provide support and services and an education that are relevant to their needs.

Through a Critical Lens: Native American Alienation from Higher Education

The Problem

Higher education has been grappling with issues associated with the discrepancy between the ethnic makeup of our country and that of our campuses since the 1960's. We have made progress; the color of our campuses has greatly changed during that time. This surface appearance does not, however, reflect the poorer retention and graduation rates of minority groups, nor the all too frequent citings of barriers facing these students and of their feeling of alienation (Loo & Rolison, 1986; Steward, Germain & Jackson, 1992; Suen, 1983).

Much of the research on the importance of diversity in colleges and universities and the need for equity in higher education has focused on the larger of these groups the African Americans and Latinos. (Allen, 1988; Attinasi, 1989; Daniels, 1991; Fleming, 1988; Pierce, 1989, Smith, 1989). Native Americans are sorely underrepresented in the literature. They are also the single most underrepresented ethnic group in American colleges and universities (McDonald, 1993). Furthermore, among minorities striving to complete college, Native Americans have long been reported to be the least successful (Astin, 1982; Falk & Aitken, 1984; Tijerina & Biemer, 1988).

The Methodology

This study took place on a large, predominantly White, research institution in the Midwest. In a total student population of 28,846 in 1999-2000, the university had 144 Native American students (.4% of the student body) and a minority population of 2,622 (9.1% of the student body). This study used a qualitative research methodology as well as realist and critical race theory perspectives for analysis. A purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) of research participants was drawn from a pool of students who had, upon admission to the University, selected Native American as their ethnicity. The registrar created, from university files, a list of students who were currently enrolled, had attended the University for more than one semester, and who were undergraduates. All fifty-five of these students were invited to participate in the study, and sixteen of those responded and were interviewed.

Intensive, in-depth interviews were the primary data gathering tool (Patton, 1990). The interviews took place between September, 1998, and March, 2000. Student interviews were triangulated with observations over a period of two years of American Indian Student Association weekly meetings and interviews with seven staff and faculty members that the students had indicated were pivotal in their success. Stauss & Corbin's (1990) grounded theory methodology

was used following a "constant comparison" of earlier with later data. Patterns and themes in the texts of the narrative transcriptions and field notes were documented in the Atlas/ti qualitative analysis software.

The data were analyzed using first level coding which is a descriptive analysis (Patton, 1990) of the texts (what was said); then second level coding or categorization of content, using Atlas/ti qualitative data analysis software (what was its meaning); third level coding looking for convergence (Guba, 1978) (what fits together); and finally, logical analysis (looking for emergent patterns and themes in the data) (Patton, 1990). Subsequently, realist and critical race theory were used to further analyze and interpret the students' experiences.

Trustworthiness (validity) was ensured through several means: 1) member checks with the participants themselves, providing them with copies of the transcripts for review and presenting my findings to them at meetings to which they were invited at two points during the analysis process for feedback in May, 1999, and May, 2000; 2) reflecting on the process, my impact on the research project, and my biases throughout the project; 3) triangulating and cross-checking data through the use of student interviews balanced by administrator and staff views and participant observation; and (4) presenting my research for critique to colleagues familiar with qualitative research methodology.

The following research questions were addressed during the data collection and data analysis processes:

1. What is the nature of the collegiate experience for Native Americans?
2. What is the nature of the factors that affect Native American college persistence?

Theoretical Frame

As stated above, the analysis of this data is presented first from a realist perspective looking at long-standing theories correlating prior grades and standardized test scores with prediction of persistence, theories of student involvement and persistence (Astin, 1982; Tinto, 1987; Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt, 1991; Murgia, Padilla, & Pavel, 1991; Steele, 1997; Turner, 1994). Third, it explores the fit between this data and long-standing theories of alienation (Dean, 1961; DeGrazia, 1948; Loo & Rolison, 1986) and then examines the suggestions made by past research for resolving the problem of student alienation and isolation (Falk & Aitken, 1984; Madrazo-Peterson & Rodrigues, 1978; Steward, Germain, & Jackson, 1992), and proposes that these are mainly suggestions to continue to recruit and retain Native American students and minority

students, in general, in environments that are themselves alienating without dealing with the root causes of such alienation.

Finally, the paradigm of the critical race theorist (Bell, 1987; Hermes, 1998; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Pagano, 1999; Parker, 1999; Scheurich & Young, 1997; Villenas, Deyhle, & Parker, 1999) was used to reanalyze the students' narratives. Critical race theory (CRT) makes the following premises: 1.) that race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the U.S. and 2.) that the racial power structure is so much a part of our institutions and our society that racially based policies and ways of behaving have become normalized. This theory is used as a lens through which to view and interpret the things that happen to Native American students on our campuses. The theme of Native American student alienation becomes much more compelling when viewed through this second lens; one sees the ways in which White privilege and the systemic nature of racism are implicated in student experience. Suggested directions for the higher education community and society at large are derived from this second look, this viewing through a critical lens.

Forces That Work Against Persistence

In their narratives about their lives on campus, many students told of difficulties, hardships, and barriers that made persistence a struggle for them. These forces had, at times, made them seriously consider dropping out of school. The students in this study spoke of almost daily bombardments, both large and small, of incidents that served to alienate them from the University, its campus, the majority of its students, often from its faculty and staff, and the community in which it is set. Such incidents have been termed "microaggressions" (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzales, & Willis, 1974; Solórzano, 1997). Individually, the barriers were not huge problems, but when experiences were compounded by multiple and on-going occurrences, they created a sense of alienation from the University and college life.

A Matter of Understanding

One experience the students in this study had that made college life uncomfortable was dealing with a lack of understanding. They faced this problem in institutional staff who did not know the students' background and what the students needed to know about college policies, procedures, and informal mores. Many of the students were the first generation of their families to attend college and had not been around a college before; they needed more explanation and more guidance than students whose families have talked about college all of their lives. In addition, faculty expectations sometimes clashed with the prior training and values of these students.

Culturally, some of the students' learning styles differed from the college norms of learning by questioning the teacher, by debating other students, by listening to lectures, and by competing for the highest position. An often "culturally insular" faculty (Melnick & Zeichner, 1998) was not knowledgeable of multicultural differences, nor of perspectives on the subject they teach which were outside of their purview. Also many of the students' personal issues were not representative of the White students on campus; quite a few of them were single mothers raising children alone. All but four were living on poverty level finances, and many had responsibilities for family members on their reservations particularly when those members became sick or passed away. Typical student services offices are often ill-equipped to deal with these experiences.

When these issues were considered using the critical race lens, one became aware of the cultural assumptions that a predominantly White male and middle class faculty could provide a balanced education for a very culturally diverse society. The cultural and racial ratio of those who are teaching and leading is far different even from the percentages of those in college classrooms, and the discrepancy is greater in lower educational levels. A lesser, but similar imbalance was observed in collegiate staff on this campus. Although Special Support Services attempted to provide people of color in advising roles, they were for the most part African American, and there was not a single Native American. The reasons for this White predominance was not usually questioned, but when considered from a critical race and historical perspective, this situation was seen to be the result of a society that is run by and for Whites (Chisom & Washington, 1997).

A Matter of Stereotypes

Stereotypes by which the students were viewed was also a barrier to a satisfying college experience. The students in this study spoke of a frequent bombardment with thoughtless stereotypical comments which I referred to earlier as "microaggressions." These are subtle, stunning, often automatic, and non-verbal exchanges which are "put downs." Though often innocuous, the cumulative weight of their never-ending burden is the major ingredient in interracial interactions. Stereotypes also resulted in misjudging the ability of these students by faculty, staff, and by other students, and their capabilities were underestimated. Stereotypes made them feel as if they are being viewed as objects, not real people, or are being prejudged on the basis of their race, not who they are individually. Finally, the use of Native American caricatures as team mascots and logos further dehumanized them. The critical race perspective helped me to see that these habitual ways of treating people of color, with little thought of the pain they cause, grew out of a larger concept of right and privilege. Even a short look back through history made me aware that

although we would no longer consider using "Jap" or "Jew" as team names, yet Native American mascots remain. The lack of respect that the use of stereotypes displays and its racial basis becomes more obvious when the critical race lens is called upon to analyze these student comments.

A Matter of Being "Other"

There are many ways in which Native students were treated as different, or as some researchers have termed it, treated as the "Other." This included being stared at, not being able to "fit in" like other students, being treated often like they were not the major mission of the institution, feeling the faculty had lower expectations of them as a group, and the assumption by other people that they were accepted to the University on the basis of affirmative action quotas and lowered standards. As a result, many of the students said they felt they must work harder than other students to gain respect. The realist conclusion drawn from these comments is often that these things (staring, not fitting in, etc.) happen because the students are different and that they should try to fit in. A critical race analysis, however, presses us to consider the question, "different from what?" We see an assumption of normalcy against which Native American students are being compared. And we see judgment about what is better or worse, normal or different that is part of a racial hierarchy.

Treatment as "Other" in some cases manifested itself in overt hostility and racist acts. They had felt subtle unspoken hostility toward their views in class discussions, had been the target of racial slurs, had received hate mail, had been falsely accused by law enforcement officials, and had been stung by individual acts of racist hate. The critical race perspective forces us to confront the fact that the hostility, the taunts, the differential police treatment are, in fact, racism. Living with racism on campus makes persistence in this environment a daily struggle.

A Matter of Values

Conflicts between their most deeply held beliefs and the prevailing value system of the University and of most members of the University community is another factor which works against persistence for some of the students. A critical race analysis uncovers for us that it is not just the difference in values, but intolerance of other belief systems and the privileging of western, White, Christian, and capitalist values over any other that make learning and fitting into the University problematic. Beliefs regarding family, the definition of who is included in the meaning of family, and the priority of family obligations conflict with how many days of a course a student

may miss for a family funeral, policies on test make-ups, allowable excuses for absence, and deadlines for assignment completion and course completion.

Competitiveness and materialism, not highly valued by many Native societies, are the hallmarks of achievement and success in the University setting. Although students may take or leave these values, there is certainly pressure to think about them in the way that the dominant culture does. This is only one of the things that leads some Native students to be concerned that they are assimilating too much of a value system that, as one student voiced it, "we are morally and ethically against."

A Matter of Curriculum

University curriculum itself is another barrier to persistence. Some of these students questioned how much the body of knowledge with which the University is filling their minds will help them reach their goal, which for so many is to return and help their people. A number of them spoke of a curriculum that except for American Indian and Native Studies courses, totally excluded any mention of their people and their contributions to what is referred to as "our civilization." Beyond this, when Native people were discussed in class or presented in readings, it was often misinformation, sometimes based on long standing stereotypes. Additionally, these students found little willingness on the part of faculty or other students to be open to other viewpoints. The critical race perspective asks us to consider the inclusiveness of the curriculum, the assumptions upon which it was developed and the hidden curriculum it communicates.

I also found that the Native American students sought out classes that focused on Native American groups or issues. Native students enroll in American Indian and Native Studies courses regardless of their majors; some consider and some do change their majors to anthropology or other fields more closely related to understanding their people and to their goal of helping their people. They talked enthusiastically about learning things about their own people and history that they never knew. Using a critical race perspective to understand this illuminates the importance of a culturally relevant and culturally congruent curriculum (Ladson-Billing, 1994; Mohatt & Erickson, 1981) to a group of students who have had little opportunity to learn in school settings about Native American issues or from a Native American perspective. The curriculum of an educational institution communicates particular values, understandings and knowledge. At many universities these are predominantly Eurocentric.

A Matter of Support

Finally in the area of university support for them as Native American students and affirmation of their culture, they speak of support as "more talk than action." They hear spoken and written policies of support for diversity, but they do not recognize its impact or they do not see the policies as having a large or positive impact on their educational experience. More often, they feel that University policy serves as an impediment to accomplishment, as "red tape," and as hoops to jump through. There is a contradiction in definitions of support between the University which seems to view its monetary contributions to Native American activities as adequate support and the students who are looking for support in terms of helpfulness, caring, and concern.

It was through the critical race analysis that I perceived the conflicting views of university support by the University administration and the students as a result of poor planning, missing communication, and lack of understanding. First, it underscores the critical importance of involving the people the University is attempting to serve in decision-making processes concerning the content and delivery of support. This is important for most populations, but particularly for those who are culturally different from those who design and implement policies and programs. Knowing what students feel they need in terms of support and then building support systems together would result in programs that are more satisfying to both sides.

Positive Forces For Persistence

In my conversations with the Native American students, it was the negative forces that seemed to take precedence. These were the issues for which the students needed solutions, and so perhaps for that reason more time was spent telling me about the things that made college life a challenge. On balance, however, there were two large areas under which the factors that help them to persist can be grouped. Those areas are (1) people who support them in a myriad of ways and (2) a place on campus to call their own where they feel unconditionally accepted. It is these two areas, people and a place, that I will discuss now.

The Emphasis on People

Almost all of the students in this study spoke at some point of someone who had believed in them and encouraged them, who saw in them a potential for success that encouraged them to see it in themselves. These supportive people included teachers, professors, advisors, a social worker, and an employer. Some gave encouragement before the students even set foot on campus, telling them of potential which they had and reasons why they should go to college. These were brief, perhaps only one time comments that changed the direction of students' lives. In other instances,

there were long time mentoring relationships, as in the case of a professor who was there for the student no matter whose class she was having trouble with for her entire college career. For another, it was a social worker in California whom she called to ask advice or explanation of things that were happening in her college life. In the view of these students, those were people who made the difference in getting or not getting a college degree.

For other students, that indispensable supporting person was a family member, a mother or father, a brother they could always call, the significant other in their lives, or a spouse. In many cases, it was other Native American students acting as extended family, helping first time mothers with child rearing advice and caring for each other's children. The support of people whether it came from the University community, from the community at large, from family back home, or from supportive fellow Native students was a critical component of successful persistence in college for these students.

Native cultures are based on valuing cooperation and working for the common good. They are not societies of rugged individualism. Closeness of family and obligation to family are its hallmarks. The significance of people helping and supporting another toward college persistence versus individually achieving that goal solely by personal determination and hard work grows out of the culture of these students. The need to build into our educational system culturally congruent practices that support persistence is a finding that grows out of a racial analysis.

The Importance of Place

The second positive force for student persistence that came out of this study was the importance of a place they felt was theirs. Its importance was partially explained in the way they used their house. The Latino/Native American Cultural Center served as a gathering place every Thursday evening where their children were welcome, and where they could bring, serve, and eat their traditional foods. While there, they shared their celebrations as well as their frustrations. They also shared advice. They said they liked having a place where they could have Native art on the walls.

Their feelings about having a place of their own was further exemplified by the intense debate about how to keep their house when the University considered moving their organization and that of the other culture-based student groups to the student union. They spoke of the house's importance as "the way we get through school."

A critical race analysis highlights the fact that as White people we are privileged to, if we choose, find places where we can be in the company of people like us and be surrounded by culturally

familiar sights, sounds, smells and tastes almost everywhere we go. For the Native American students on this campus, such places are almost non-existent. Culture is the essence of who we are, of who they are. When one considers that the Latino/Native American Cultural Center is the one location on campus where these students felt their culture and saw themselves reflected in others like them, the significance of place becomes very clear.

Things Not Said

As important a finding as what the students said may be the things they did not say. Numerous initiatives and programs have been set up by this institution for the encouragement of attendance and persistence by students of color. These include the recruitment office now called Opportunity at Iowa; Special Support Services which is a counseling and advising office for minorities, the Latino/Native American Cultural Center; the Native American organizations that include the American Indian Student Association (AISA), American Indian Science and Engineering Students (AISES), and Native American Law Student Association (NALSA); the annual powwow; the AISES Summer Program for Native American high school students; and the American Indian and Native Studies Program which offers courses and a minor in this area of study.

In my conversations with the students who participated in this study concerning these University initiatives their comments were a lukewarm recognition but not hearty praise. For example, most explained how they were recruited and some even praised the University for recruiting them. Several said, however, that they felt they had been led to believe, when they were recruited, that there were more Native American students on campus than they found. Some misinterpreted the University's commitment to diversity to mean that on a campus of 28,000 students they would see more faces like their own. Another student spoke highly of a person who was instrumental in getting her into the University, but noted that she had not heard from him since.

Another surprising absence was comment on the University's support of the powwow. The Native students' representatives, like the AISA and AISES presidents, the powwow chairman and other committee members had met with University officials to set up the $70,000 powwow budget. They would have to be well aware of the University's substantial contribution to cover the fixed costs, but it was not mentioned in our interviews when I asked about University support, nor did I hear praise or appreciation for that financial help raised in AISA meetings when the powwow was discussed. In contrast, University administrators' opinions were that the University has been

very generous with this project. Indeed, the University contribution which provides the huge athletic arena and the related equipment, security, and a box office is vital to the success of the powwow. Such a large attraction (drawing 7,000 people) could not take place in Iowa's April weather without an indoor facility. The students, however, did not mention this as a sign of a supportive administration. Rather their examples of support tended to emphasize personal contributions and/or efforts. For instance, the law professor who "came to bat" for the students when University policy was going to be enforced that would cost the student group $10,000 to buy out the contract food vendor was identified as a source of support.

In a similar vein, the students seemed unaware of the effort going on in offices on campus that were working constantly on recruitment, retention, and other minority initiatives like the First Nations Program, which grants in-state tuition for all students from tribes with a historical connection to Iowa. The work to gain approval by the regents for this program and the recruitment of qualified of the students were considerable efforts. The students' comments indicated that the University personnel in the above described positions were not supporting them because "they never come to our meetings" or "we never see them."

The emphasis placed on personalized support and the lack of recognition of certain institutional support are significant findings. They are findings that reflect a conflicting understanding of what it means to be supportive, as well as a contrast in preference for either personal (the students') or institutional forms of support.

The Contribution of this Study to the Literature

The findings of this study are in some instances congruent with previous work, in others, they challenge the assertions of earlier theory. In addition to this, they make new contributions to our understanding of the Native American undergraduate student experience and to Native American persistence in higher education.

Much early research on persistence dealt with the correlation between high school grades, standardized test scores and college persistence. This was followed by research on minority students, and Native American students in particular, that challenged the predictive value of those academic attributes for eventual college success (Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman (1993). My findings support those of Benjamin, et. al. that high school grades, and test scores are not predictive of Native American persistence. Indeed, the students in this study varied with regard to high school achievement, and unsurprisingly they did not mention grades or standardized test scores as factors that influenced their persistence. This is not to say, however, that they did not in

some cases indicate that college was academically challenging and that some required tutoring or had to retake courses. However, academic issues were ones with which they knew or had learned how to deal. The issues the students felt made college difficult were environmental rather than academic.

The second prominent body of knowledge on persistence includes the theories of Astin (1975), Tinto (1987), and Kuh, Schuh, & Whitt (1991) which deal with psychosocial models of persistence based on involvement or integration. To some degree, my findings support these theories regarding the importance to students of feeling that they belong and are wanted. The student perceptions in this study of barriers and issues that led to a pervasive feeling of alienation are much like the "malintegration" of which Tinto speaks. The students in my study, further, indicated that it was the accumulation of alienating factors that made them sometimes seriously consider not completing their education. Thus, malintegration does work against persistence.

However, all of these psycho-social models include ways to foster involvement or integration that are based on White norms and do not appear to be as applicable to Native American students. Noteworthy is Tinto's assertion that students are more likely to persist if they separate to some degree from family and pre-college friends. My results support the findings of Benjamin, Chambers, and Reiterman (1993) for Native American students and of Cabrera & Nora (1994) for minority students that maintaining ties with family and going home to receive the encouragement and support for who they are, are critical to their persistence. The Native American students that I worked with felt family connections were essential. One student said, "I don't know how they make it if they can't get home to see their families."

My findings like those of Murgia, Padilla, & Pavel (1991) support Tinto's contention that integration into college life often begins in small enclaves and that these smaller communities are important ones to encourage. Attinasi (1986) found attempts to "scale down" the social, physical and academic environments so that the students can deal with them effectively were common. Fraternities and sororities, student government, as well as athletic and religious groups are examples of small social enclaves. Ethnic organizations and ethnic cultural centers serve a similar function for students like the Native Americans in this study. In fact, ethnic organizations and cultural centers may be of even greater importance than fraternities, athletic and religious groups which serve the dominant cultural group. This is because one's ethnicity can limit access to majority White enclaves either through self-selection or through intentional segregation. If, in such cases, a student's access is limited largely to ethnic enclaves, then the efficacy of those enclaves in

socializing the student to campus life and supporting that student becomes paramount (Murgia, et al., 1991). Many of the students whom I interviewed indicated that involvement with the Native organizations was the extent of their extracurricular involvement. They expressed feelings that contact with Native students had been of great benefit during their college careers. These findings, thus, compliment and support some assertions of these realist researchers.

As noted earlier the critical race perspective has not been widely utilized in examinations of higher education persistence, and to my knowledge it has not been used at all to examine the persistence of Native Americans in higher education. It was for these reasons that I considered my findings in terms of research that focused on culturally different students in higher education and research that, in my perspective, utilized elements of critical race theory (CRT).

Critical race theory contributed to the finding regarding the importance of family, the awareness of the cultural values which underlie this research outcome. Traditionally, many Native cultures like Latino culture have three types of value orientations 1) perceived obligations to provide material and emotional support to the extended family, 2) reliance on relatives for support, and 3) perception of relatives as behavior and attitudinal referents (Marin & Marin, 1991). These beliefs contrast with the normative White value of becoming independent of family as one becomes a young adult and of increasing one's reliance on peers as behavioral referents. Out of this background data and the data from student interviews, I find that encouraging the maintenance of family ties by Native American students supports persistence for very cultural reasons.

The alienation of Native American students and other students of color on predominantly White campuses has been studied (Burbach & Thompson, 1971; Loo & Rolison, 1986; Madrazo-Peterson & Rodriguez, 1978; Smith, 1989; Suen, 1983; and Turner, 1994). This research has found causes for alienation in unwelcoming climate, in cultural domination, and in social isolation.

This study found the same causes of alienation: unwelcoming climate, domination by White culture, and feelings of isolation. A contribution of this study is the relationship found between White privilege and the alienating conditions described by Native American students that Burbach & Thompson noted in 1971.

> [M]inority students encounter within the microcosm of the university the same problems that they confront in the larger society. But when this reality is experienced against the backdrop of hope and promise anticipated through higher education, it often serves to exacerbate the differences of minorities within a society and university which largely exhibit white tradition and values.

Since Burbach and Thompson's research was conducted (thirty years ago), seldom has the blame for the problems faced on White campuses been so squarely placed on the shoulders of White society. My study reiterates that alienation of Native students and other people of color is the result of the system of racism on which this society operates. Many of the issues which bothered the students in my study are the direct result of White privilege and the dominant/subordinate relationship that is maintained between the White race and people of color.

Just as the critical race analysis enhanced my understanding of student alienation, so it also added to my understanding of the importance of a place for these students. Research on the need for cultural and ethnic centers has, for the most part, seen these facilities as places for students to get involved and meet other people. This study through the critical race theory analysis has added to that conception, the psychological need that border crossers who are separating from one culture and relocating to another have. For border crossers, the transition to college can be a time of great disequilibrium (Levy-Warren, 1987). Such students often have to learn how to step in and out of multiple contexts and move back and forth between their Native world and the new world of college. Related to this, they may experience what Du Bois termed "double consciousness," viewing themselves in the stereotypical views of others. In these circumstances, adapting to this new collegiate life may be made easier, Levy-Warren has said, if a place is always available for them to go, a place that might evoke a sense of comfort that originates from early cultural upbringing. So a place where they can depend on seeing others like themselves, a place that is filled with images of who they are, sounds, smells and tastes of their culture is a grounding force in an otherwise destabilizing world. For these students who see no tangible signs of their old culture in the new surroundings, the house with its picture of Geronimo and Aztec designs, its tastes of Indian tacos makes life in the strange environment easier and reduces alienating factors which hinder persistence. This need is not because they are students away from home for the first time, but rather because they are people who, unlike White students, see none of their culture reflected in the University environment (except for their cultural center).

If as Turner (1994) suggested, the rest of the campus makes them feel like they are "guests in someone else's house," their cultural center is the place where they can feel at home. The findings of this study include the significance of a place of their own. As one student noted, gathering at the center is, "our way of getting through school." These words indicate that a place has a strong impact on persistence.

The importance of a place that is their own can also be attributed to every individual's need for a strong personal ethnic identity. One cannot have a strong personal identity, Phinney, Lochner, & Murphy, (1990) argue, without a group identity. A place where people of similar cultural background may come together to reinforce and build a positive group identity seems critical to this identity development process. Murgia, et. al. (1991) stipulate that ethnicity gives an individual a sense of place in the world, and fellow ethnics are a source of constancy in that the student has no need to continuously explain himself or herself. One important aspect of a place that belongs to these students is simply having a space where people of like racial and cultural background can come together; the place facilitates that gathering. More than that, however, it is a place that surrounds them with the comfort of their culture.

A Multiple Framed Research Analysis

Previously, I argued that the use of a single lens through which to view the data limits our understanding of educational issues. One analytical framework is likely to overlook phenomena and may fail to make certain observations or give voice to certain perspectives. As Tierney (1993) has said,

> Theory needs to explain not only what is (the understood reality of a situation) but also what could be. With regard to student participation in post-secondary education, we need to develop theoretical horizons that do not call upon a unitary synthesis of what we want students to become, but rather allow for the multiple voices that exist among students to be heard.

A multiple-framed data analysis and research design has definitive implications for research results. There were obvious similarities and differences between the two sets of analyses, but there are also, I believe, benefits to using two frames.

Both analyses made use of the same interviews and field notes, but the way in which these data were examined differed based on perspective. The questions I asked about what the data were saying were different. From the realist approach, I asked what did the participants say and what does the literature say about that? The dependence rested heavily on prior research and taking the students' words at face value. With the critical race analysis, I looked at the primary elements of critical race theory as defined by prior research and asked questions like how has race and racism in society impacted or caused the issues these narratives speak of? I was looking for causes that lie deeper than the surface appearances seen by realists who assume what is seen at the surface level is normal. A critical researcher refuses to accept what is seen or heard at face value. Indeed, I

questioned the verity of interviewee accounts and compared the statements of participants with one another as well as with University personnel and with document data.

Thus, the methods of analysis and the questions asked of the data were the distinction between the realist analysis and the critical race analysis. Let us now look at some of the continuities and discontinuities which emerged from these two analyses.

Continuities and Discontinuities

Both the realist analysis and critical race analysis found a need for increased student of color enrollment, the necessity of more faculty of color, a need for culturally sensitive faculty, the reality of alienation and isolation, the importance of supportive people, the importance of maintaining family encouragement and family ties, and the importance of small enclaves of students with similar interests. The continuities between the two, however, stopped there. The critical race analysis attributed different reasons for the needs for greater numbers of people of color; supportive people, family ties, and small enclaves of students. It, additionally, exposed phenomena not found at all by realist analysis.

Realist theory views people as individuals whereas critical race theory views people as members of communities or cultures. This perspective changes who we see and what we see in a number of the stories told in the narratives which are the data of this study. CRT approaches analysis centered on the construct we call race. It first of all recognizes that in our society "Whiteness" is a location of structural advantage or race privilege, and a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed (Frankenberg, 1993). We have to look very closely in order even to see them. This position of advantage which has come to be called "White privilege" is inextricably interwoven with what it means to be a person of color (including being a Native American) in this society.

Many of the barriers noted by the students in this study are the flip side of privileges held by White students. These barriers exist for Native students because of the racialized hierarchy which privileges certain groups over others. White students have for the most part professors who are from their culture and understand them. White students are generally judged on their individual merits and not by stereotypes. White students are not the outsider, the Other, and are not stared at, isolated as a group, assumed to be less capable students, and as a group assumed to be enrolled because of affirmative action. As a group, White students do not face racial slurs, receive unfair police accusations because of their race, or receive racial hate mail. The values of the White students' culture is the set of values which is subscribed to by the institution. The opposite, you

will recall, were the situations faced by the Native American students. The fact that these two groups, White students and the Native respondents to this study, face different treatment is because of this artificially contrived hierarchy which is racism.

The CRT analysis noted how it is assumed "normal" to teach primarily the intellectual and artistic achievements of White Anglo culture and think that education is objective and neutral. The realist analysis recognized some perspectives were missing from the curriculum but still saw as "objectivity," assumptions about the body of important knowledge to be taught. The realist perspective was that this "neutral" curriculum provided "equal opportunity" for the education of all, but the critical analysis demonstrated how these terms, "neutral" and "equal opportunity," perpetuate a system of privilege. In the analysis of this study, the realist portion recognized that the curriculum has left out some perspectives and some facts that should now be included. It took the critical perspective, however, to insist that we not only include, but hold up to critical review (not only by higher education officials, but by the students as well) the reasons why this has historically been the case.

The CRT analysis saw the need for supportive people for students of color as more than the reducers of collegiate stress, but as critically needed because these students, since they are not White, find it more difficult to access informal campus networks of support and find the environment alienating and hostile to people of their race. It is because of the difference in race and culture and because of the way in which the culture of one race is privileged over the culture of the other on the college campus and in society at large that maintaining family ties is essential for these students. Critical race analysis suggested that enclaves to bring together people of the same culture is vital in an environment in which that culture is suppressed or dominated by an alien culture.

Implications for Practice and Policy

The implications for practice and policy in higher education that grow out of this study are best looked at as broad far reaching concepts. In terms of long-lasting change, it is important to take this perspective, to consider implications at an institutional level. The stories of these students have implications for the University at large and for higher education as an institution. Hastings Rashdall (1895) once said, "Ideas pass into great historic forces by embodying themselves in institutions." It is at this level where a commitment to diversity in higher education must begin. A commitment to diversity must become embodied in the institution itself. Unless higher education is totally committed to diversity, the Native American students of this study and the ones who follow

them into college will continue to feel alienated, to feel that they do not really belong, and their rates of persistence will show the impact of these perceptions.

The overriding implication of this study is that a commitment to diversity in higher education is needed. This is a commitment that must come from upper levels of administration and permeate all of the institution. This is true on the University campus where this study took place as well as in higher education generally. Commitment to diversity can be viewed as a threefold problem as expressed by Melnick & Zeichner (1998) and as a goal to be reached by targeting three areas: 1) selection, 2) socialization through curriculum and instruction, and 3) institutional environment.

Selection of more people of color both in the ranks of administrators, faculty and staff and in larger proportions of students from diverse backgrounds is essential if our avowal that universities are committed to diversity is going to have any validity. Although Villegas (1993) was speaking of teacher education programs, the following ideas apply to any entity working for diversity,

> The success of any...program in restructuring for diversity is largely influenced by the norms and processes of the host institution....programs found in institutions actively committed to the inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds are more likely to succeed in addressing issues of diversity than those located in institutions that are insensitive to or silent on matters of cultural inclusion (p. 3).

The students in this study said that for years they have been asking for more Native American faculty, and that it was strange having a non-Native person teach you in Native Studies class. They noted that it would help to have people on campus who understood their cultural obligations. The importance of Native American faculty and staff goes beyond providing first hand knowledge of the culture of these students, serving as role models, and increasing the comfort level so that they are not in such an all-White environment. The presence of Native American faculty and administrators speaks loudly and clearly of the institution's commitment to diversity in its own makeup.

What are some ways in which this can be facilitated? In times of fiscal constraints, Melnick and Zeichner (1998) found that institutions that were successful with educating for diversity and in dealing with the limitations of cultural insularity of their faculty were ones that were providing incentives to departments such as specially funded positions to hire qualified faculty of color when new faculty positions are limited in number. Second, hiring faculty of color

is not enough; the climate must be sufficiently supportive so that they will stay, and they must be promoted to higher tenured ranks. They must be fully a part of the University structure.

An additional need within the faculty and staff is a body of people, whether people of color or White, who are culturally sensitive and understanding of their students from all cultural groups. Cultural sensitivity begins with awareness. Training for faculty and staff and materials made available to them which help them grow in cultural sensitivity is a place to begin. Attempts to clarify understanding and misunderstanding is essential in multicultural interchanges.

The difference between the administration's and the students' understanding of University support is illustrative. The University, well-intentioned and committing considerable money and effort, is still not perceived by the students as supportive. This perplexing quandary might be alleviated if Native students were involved in decision making and planning for the kinds of support they could receive. Then what the students are taking for granted (spaces and places for their activities) would be seen as a choice of a kind of support that they participated in selecting. Likewise, administrators and faculty could be made aware that, for the students, support is seen as coming to their meetings and making personal contact.

Additionally, if an institution is committed to diversity, it must also continue to improve the percentages of students of color that it recruits, admits, and nurtures to graduation in all programs; undergraduate, graduate, and professional. People of color and Native Americans, in particular, are still grossly underrepresented on most campuses.

One way of both improving the recruitment of students of color and of developing the important supportive and understanding relationships between faculty and students is to involve faculty in the recruiting and orientation process. Universities can create settings in which greater mentoring and interpersonal interaction between faculty and students can take place and are expected. Students themselves can be used as recruiters.

The second target area for demonstrating a commitment to diversity is socialization through curriculum and instruction. Curriculum that is, in and of itself, a commitment to diversity is one that 1) shows diverse perspectives in the concepts taught and learned, and 2) uses materials that exemplify the commitment to diversity.

There are a number of ways that universities committed to diversity can encourage these needed changes. The University can reward the reworking of course syllabi for diversity. For busy faculty who would find it easier not to change the way a course is taught, an incentive may bring about the curricular change the institution would like to see. The institution truly committed

to changing an insular faculty will provide new personnel orientation and in-service training to educate faculty on the backgrounds, learning styles, and cultures of the students they teach; about recognition of their own biases and limitations of perspectives; and about stereotypes and the negative results of stereotyping people. Further, universities committed to diversity can add courses on topics and perspectives that have not been taught before. Activities indicating an effort toward and commitment to diversity can be tied to tenure requirements.

An institution committed to diversity will ensure that its faculty present ideas in a variety of ways so that students who learn in a variety of ways may all find a method through which they can understand the information presented. Ways to accommodate diverse learning styles are not always complicated or difficult to implement.

The third and final target of University effort should be the institutional environment. This area shows clearly the importance of beginning with the first two, selection and socialization. Work on changing the environment or the racial climate on campus or raising an appreciation for diversity within a student body cannot happen in an institution that does not first show commitment in its own actions in hiring, supporting and granting tenure to diverse faculty and in presenting a curriculum that, like the University, supports diversity.

It is in this realm of the institutional environment where the Native American students of this study were confronted with many of the factors that alienated them from the University and made persistence a greater challenge. Alienation grew out of emotions caused by interactions with fellow students, racial slurs, hostility or intolerance of diversity in class discussions, and thoughtless stereotypical comments. These acts may be initiated by students, but a culturally sensitive faculty can often channel such issues in more positive directions. Thus, commitment to diversity begins with a change in the institution itself, its priorities, its rewards and expectations of its faculty. Secondly, a student body working with a curriculum that fosters awareness of cultures other than the dominant one, that presents values and contributions from a diversity of cultures will be more likely to self regulate hurtful acts like the use of racial epithets and stereotypes. Institutional environments can also be changed through explicit education in cultural sensitivity that can be made a part of student orientation, dormitory life and even general education requirements at colleges and universities.

Some people have made a distinction between the temporary and changing climate of an institution and its more permanent and continuous culture. It is moving the culture of the institution to embody a commitment to diversity that should be the goal. A window to the culture

of an institution is its use of symbols (March, 1984). For the institution truly committed to diversity, an inventory should be made of what the symbols on campus say. Whose culture is reflected? Symbols can be the artifacts seen around a campus, the art on the walls of buildings, the statuary or lack of art in public spaces. Symbols are seen in geospacial things like the architecture of buildings, whether walking paths or city streets separate the buildings, which disciplines or departments have the newest and most expensive facilities. Leaders can make lasting impacts on culture through the use of symbols for they speak loudly.

For example, as I walk down the hallway of the University library, I see a wall of gilt-framed White male portraits in oil. They are the presidents of this institution from its founding. There is currently a woman president, but her portrait is not yet there. What does this wall of White men say about mission, about the status quo? Would a different or more significant statement be made if the first woman president, the first African American vice president, a Latino associate vice president, and a Native American professor appeared on those walls? A different message is sent by the first floor wall of photographs of exemplary faculty which does include diversity of gender and ethnicity. Which is the message an institution committed to diversity wants to send?

The finding of the importance of a place on campus which celebrates the art, the music, and the foods of Native American students has implications beyond the need for a place such as the cultural center for students to feel comfortable. It also challenges the institution to carry such celebrations of culture into other public spaces used by all students, for that would speak to the centrality of these students and their culture to what the university truly is.

Thus, it is important that the University make a deep commitment to diversity. As expressed in the paragraphs above, this means more than recruiting students of color to campus. It is a commitment to a steady effort to mold the institutional culture into a new image.

In addition to making an institutional commitment, the needs implied by this study can be worked on at an individual level. We recognize how tempting it is to say, the problem is so large that one person cannot solve it; therefore, why even try? Yet, history is replete with stories of change that that had small beginnings. To hear the experiences of these students, recognize the needs, and yet do nothing about them because one waits for the University culture to change first, is to fail in one's own responsibility for change. There are issues for which one must hold oneself responsible and take a personal stand.

Student voices cry out for understanding from faculty and staff. Members of the University community can meet that need by making an effort to know who their students are, what their culture is, and what their needs are. Faculty and staff can make known their willingness to listen, to help, and to develop a relationship with students. The participants in this study said that stereotypes are a problem they face. Faculty and staff individually can monitor their own thoughtless use of stereotypes and take a stand when they hear others use them. The students ask that their people be included in the curriculum. An individual faculty member can determine how and where that is appropriate within his or her discipline and area of teaching. These students ask that we respect their values. Being open to learning from them what their values are can be a step outside of our encapsulated and insular world. They ask that the University support them with appreciation, caring, and respect not just with money for their programs. The support they are asking for is person to person support, not large scale institutional programs. This need can be met one person at a time.

There are also implications for the field of educational research. I have presented a case for the usefulness of multiple frames of analysis in educational research. The two lenses of analysis illuminated both continuities and discontinuities in the findings of this study. Phenomena which would have been missed by one method were exposed by the other. Scholars engaged in research, particularly when dealing with populations historically underrepresented in education, may wish to use a multiple framed research design for their study. In order to better understand the educational experiences of Native American students and all students of color, we need to reveal their perspectives through more than a single theoretical frame. Through seeking to understand the perspectives of all student constituencies, the educational system will be better able to meet all student needs.

Conclusion

> The major challenge is to meet the need to generate new leadership...[It] requires that we look beyond the same elites and voices that recycle the older frameworks. We need leaders...who can situate themselves within a larger historical narrative of this country and our world, who can grasp the complex dynamics of our peoplehood and imagine a future grounded on the best of our past yet who are attuned to the obstacles that now perplex us (West, 1994, pp. 12-13).

These words of philosopher and theorist Cornel West speak of the larger solution that I see as necessary to the solving of the smaller problem with which this research began. I started by

looking at the low rates of persistence in colleges and universities by one of the smallest oppressed groups in U.S. society, America's First People. Out of the narratives of sixteen Native American students, stories of their personal lived experiences, and from the analysis of their words came a reality enmeshed within a system of privilege and oppression that affects all of us, people of color and White people alike. It emerges as a problem that is not solved by "Band-aid" programs that attempt to heal the illness by covering one small sore. We need leaders of vision with a commitment to diversity who will dedicate themselves and higher education to remolding the culture of the University so that it will support the collegiate persistence and improved quality of student life for Native Americans and all students in higher education.

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